ANNEXURE No. 11

[Vide Unstarred Question 798 (a) to (c) answered on 30th July, 2000]

Detailed declaration adopted in the U.N. General Assembly's Special Session on HIV/AIDS alongwith the Statement made by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Member of Parliament and Leader of Opposition, at this Special Session

(A) UN General Assembly—Special Session on HIV/AIDS

Declaration of Commitment of HIV/AIDS

"Global Crisis—Global Action"

1. We, Heads of State and Government and Representatives of States and Governments, assembled at the United Nations, from 25 to 27 June 2001, for the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly convened in accordance with resolution 55/13, as a matter of urgency, to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects as well as to secure a global commitment to enhancing coordination and intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat it in a comprehensive manner;

2. Deeply concerned that the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, through its devastating scale and impact, constitutes a global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity, as well as to the effective enjoyment of human rights, which undermines social and economic development throughout the world and affects all levels of society—national, community, family and individual;

3. Noting with profound concern, that by the end of the year 2000, 36.1 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS, 90 per cent in developing countries and 75 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa;

4. Noting with grave concern that all people, rich and poor, without distinction of age, gender or race are affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, further noting that people in developing countries are the most affected and that women, young adults and children, in particular girls, are the most vulnerable;

5. Concerned also that the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS will constitute a serious obstacle to the realization of the global development goals we adopted at the Millennium Summit;

6. Recalling and reaffirming our previous commitments on HIV/AIDS made through:

- The United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000;
- The Political Declaration and Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development of 1 July 2000;
- The Political Declaration and Further Action and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 10 June 2000;
- Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development of 2 July 1999;

- The regional call for action to fight HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific of 25 April 2001;
- The Abuja Declaration and Framework for Action for the Fight Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases in Africa, 27 April 2001;
- The Declaration of the Ibero-America Summit of Heads of State of November 2000 in Panama;
- The Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS, 14 February, 2001;
- The European Union Programme for Action: Accelerated Action on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis in the Context of Poverty Reduction of 14 May 2001;
- The Baltic Sea Declaration on HIV/AIDS Prevention of 4 May 2000;
- The Central Asian Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 18 May 2001;

7. Convinced of the need to have an urgent, coordinated and sustained response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic,which will build on the experience and lessons learned over the past 20 years;

8. Noting with grave concern that Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, is currently the worst affected region where HIV/AIDS is considered as a state of emergency, which threatens development, social cohesion, political stability, food security and life expectancy and imposes a devastating economic burden and that the dramatic situation on the continent needs urgent and exceptional national, regional and international action;

9. Welcoming the commitments of African Heads of State or Government, at the Abuja Special Summit in April 2001, particularly their pledge to set a target of allocating at least 15 per cent of their annual national budgets for the improvement of the health sector to help address the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and recognizing that action to reach this target, by those countries whose resources are limited, will need to be complemented by increased international assistance;

10. Recognizing also that other regions are seriously affected and confront similar threats, particularly the Caribbean region, with the second highest rate HIV infection after sub-Saharan Africa, the Asia-Pacific region where 7.5 million people are already living with HIV/AIDS, the Latin America region with 1.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and the Central and Eastern European region with very rapidly rising infection rates; and that the potential exists for a rapid escalation of the epidemic and its impact throughout the world if no specific measures are taken;

11. Recognizing that poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy are among the principal contributing factors to the spread of HIV/AIDS and noting with grave concern that HIV/AIDS is compounding poverty and is now reversing or impeding development in many countries and should therefore be addressed in an integrated manner;

12. Noting that armed conflicts and natural disasters also exacerbate the spread of the epidemic;

13. Noting further that stigma, silence, discrimination, and denial, as well as lack of confidentiality, undermine prevention, care and treatment efforts and increase the impact of the epidemic on individuals, families, communities and nations and must also be addressed;

14. Stressing that gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS;

15. Recognizing that access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS is one of the fundamental elements to achieve progressively the full realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;

16. Recognizing that the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is an essential element in a global response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including in the areas of prevention, care, support and treatment, and that it reduces vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and prevents stigma and related discrimination against people living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS;

17. Acknowledging that prevention of HIV infection must be the mainstay of the national, regional and international response to the epidemic; and that prevention, care, support and treatment for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDs are mutually reinforcing elements of an effective response and must be integrated in a comprehensive approach to combat the epidemic;

18. Recognizing the need to achieve the prevention goals set out in this Declaration in order to stop the spread of the epidemic and acknowledging that all countries must continue to emphasize widespread and effective prevention, including awareness-raising campaigns through education, nutrition, information and health-care services;

19. Recognizing that care, support and treatment can contribute to effective prevention through increased acceptance of voluntary and confidential counselling and testing, and by keeping people living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups in close contact with health-care systems and facilitating their access to information, counselling and preventive supplies;

20. Emphasizing the important role of cultural, family, ethical and religious factors in the prevention of the epidemic, and in treatment, care and support, taking into account the particularities of each country as well as the importance of respecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

21. Noting with concern that some negative economic, social, cultural, political, financial and legal factors are hampering awareness, education, prevention, care, treatment and support efforts;

22. Noting the importance of establishing and strengthening human resources and national health and social infrastructures as imperatives for the effective delivery of prevention, treatment, care and support services;

23. Recognizing that effective prevention, care and treatment strategies will require behavioural changes and increased availability of and non-discriminatory access to, inter alia, vaccines, condoms, microbicides, lubricants, sterile injecting equipment, drugs including anti-retroviral therapy, diagnostics and related technologies as well as increased research and development;

24. Recognizing also that the cost availability and affordability of drugs and related technology are significant factors to be reviewed and addressed in all aspects and that there is a need to reduce the cost of these drugs and technologies in close collaboration with the private sector and pharmaceutical companies;

25. Acknowledging that the lack of affordable pharmaceuticals and of feasible supply structures and health systems continue to hinder an effective response to HIV/AIDS in many countries, especially for the poorest people and recalling efforts to make drugs available at low prices for those in need;

26. Welcoming the efforts of countries to promote innovation and the development of domestic industries consistent with international law in order to increase access to medicines to protect the health of their populations; and noting that the impact of international trade agreements on access to or local manufacturing of, essential drugs and on the development of new drugs needs to be further evaluated;

27. Welcoming the progress made in some countries to contain the epidemic, particularly through: strong political commitment and leadership at the highest levels, including community leadership; effective use of available resources and traditional medicines; successful prevention, care, support and treatment strategies; education and information initiatives; working in partnership with communities, civil society, people living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups; and the active promotion and protection of human rights; and recognizing the importance of sharing and building on our collective and diverse experiences, through regional and international cooperation including North/South, South/South cooperation and triangular cooperation;

28. Acknowledging that resources devoted to combating the epidemic both at the national and international levels are not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem;

29. Recognizing the fundamental importance of strengthening national, regional and subregional capacities to address and effectively combat HIV/AIDS and that this will require increased and sustained human, financial and technical resources through strengthened national action and cooperation and increased regional, subregional and international cooperation;

30. Recognizing that external debt and debt-servicing problems have substantially constrained the capacity of many developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, to finance the fight against HIV/AIDS;

31. Affirming the key role played by the family in prevention, care, support and treatment of persons affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, bearing in mind that in different cultural, social and political systems various forms of the family exist;

32. Affirming that beyond the key role played by communities, strong partnerships among Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, people living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups, medical, scientific and educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, the business sector including generic and research-based pharmaceutical companies, trade unions, media, parliamentarians, foundations, community organizations, faith-based organizations and traditional leaders are important;

33. Acknowledging the particular role and significant contribution of people living with HIV/AIDS, young people and civil society actors in addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects and recognizing that their full involvement and participation in design, planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes is crucial to the development of effective responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

34. Further acknowledging the efforts of international humanitarian organizations combating the epidemic, including among others the volunteers of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the most affected areas all over the world;

35. Commending the leadership role in HIV/AIDS policy and coodination in the United Nations system of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board; noting its endorsement in December 2000 of the Global Strategy Framework for HIV/AIDS, which could assist, as appropriate, Member States and relevant civil society actors in the development of HIV/AIDS strategies, taking into account the particular context of the epidemic in different parts of the world;

36. Solemnly declare our commitment to address the HIV/AIDS crisis by taking action as follows, taking into account the diverse situations and circumstances in different regions and countries throughout the world;

Leadership

Strong leadership at all levels of society is essential for an effective response to the epidemic

Leadership by Governments in combating HIV/AIDS is essential and their efforts should be complemented by the full and active participation of civil society, the business community and the private sector

Leadership involves personal commitment and concrete actions

At the national level

37. *By* 2003, *ensure the development and implementation of multisectoral national strategies* and financing plans for combating HIV/AIDS that: address the epidemic in forthright terms; confront stigma, silence and denial; address gender and age-based dimensions of the epidemic; eliminate discrimination and marginalization; involve partnerships with civil society and the business sector and the full participation of people living with HIV/AIDS, those in vulnerable groups and people mostly at risk, particularly women and young people; are resourced to the extent possible from national budgets without excluding other sources, inter alia international cooperation; fully promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; integrate a gender perspective; and address risk, vulnerability, prevention, care, treatment and support and reduction of the impact of the epidemic; and strengthen health, education and legal system capacity;

38. *By* 2003, *integrate HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and impact mitigation priorities into the mainstream of development planning*, including in poverty eradication strategies, national budget allocations and sectoral development plans;

At the regional and subregional level

39. Urge and support regional organizations and partners to: be actively involved in addressing the crisis; intensify regional, subregional and interregional cooperation and coordination; and develop regional strategies and responses in support of expanded country level efforts;

40. Support all regional and subregional initiatives on HIV/AIDS including: the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (IPAA) and the ECA-African

Development Forum Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership to Overcome HIV/AIDS; the Abuja Declaration and Framework for Action for the Fight Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Diseases; the CARICOM Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS; the ESCAP Regional Call for Action to Fight HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific; the Baltic Sea Initiative and Action Plan; the Horizontal Technical Cooperation Group on HIV/AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean; the European Union Programme for Action: Accelerated Action on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis in the context of poverty reduction;

41. Encourage the development of regional approaches and plans to address HIV/AIDS;

42. Encourage and support local and national organizations to expand and strengthen regional partnerships, coalitions and network;

43. Encourage the United Nations Economic and Social Council to request the regional commissions within their respective mandates and resources to support national efforts in their respective regions in combating HIV/AIDS;

At the global level

44. Support greater action and coordination by all relevant United Nations system organizations, including their full participation in the development and implementation of a regularly updated United Nations strategic plan for HIV/AIDS, guided by the principles contained in this Declaration;

45. Support greater cooperation between relevant United Nations system organizations and international organizations combating HIV/AIDS;

46. Foster stronger collaboration and the development of innovative partnerships between the public and private sectors and 2003, establish and strengthen mechanisms that involved the private sector and civil society partners and people living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable group in the fight against HIV/AIDS;

Prevention

Prevention must be the mainstay of our response

47. *By* 2003, *establish time-bound national targets to achieve* the internationally agreed global prevention goat to reduce (by 2005 HIV prevalence among young men and women aged 15 to 24 in the most affected countries by 25 per cent) and by 25 per cent globally by 2010, and to intensify efforts to achieve these targets as well as to challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes, and gender inequalities in relation to HIV/AIDS, encouraging the active involvement of men and boys;

48. By 2003, establish national prevention targets, recognizing and addressing factors leading to the spread of the epidemic and increasing people's vulnerability, to reduce HIV incidence for those identifiable groups, within particular local contexts, which currenly have high or increasing rates of HIV infection, or which available public health information indicates are at the highest risk for new infection;

49. By 2005, (strengthen the response to HIV/AIDS in the world of work by establishing and implementing prevention and care programmes in public, private and informal work sectors) and take measures to provide a supportive workplace environment for people living with HIV/AIDS;

50. By 2005, develop and begin to implement national, regional and international strategies that facilitate access to HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for migrants and mobile workers, including the provision of information on health and social services;

51. **By 2003, implement universal precautions in health-care settings to prevent transmission of HIV infection;**

52. By 2005, (ensure: that a wide range of prevention programmes which take account of local circumstances, ethics and cultural values, is available in all countries), particularly the most affected countries, including information, education and communication, in languages most understood by communities and respectful of cultures, aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviour and encouraging responsible sexual behaviour, including abstinence and fidelity; expanded access to essential commodities, including male and female condoms and sterile injecting equimpment; harm reduction efforts related to drug use; expanded access to voluntary and confidential counselling and testing; safe blood supplies; and early and effective treatment of sexually transmittable infections;

53. By 2005, (ensure that at least 90 per cent. and by 2010 at least 95 per cent of young men and women aged 15 to 24 have access to the information, education, including peer education) and youth-specific HIV education, and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection; in full partnership with youth, parents, families, educators and health-care providers;

54. By 2005, (reduce the proportion of infants infected with HIV by 20 per cent, and by 50 per cent by 2010, by: ensuring that 80 per cent of pregnant women accessing antenatal care have information, counselling and other HIV prevention services available to them), increasing the availability of and by providing access for HIV-infected women and babies to effective treatment to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as well as through effective interventions for HIV-infected women, including voluntary and confidential counselling and testing, access to treatment, especially anti-retroviral therapy and, where appropriate, breast milk substitutes and the provision of a continuum of care;

Care, support and treatment

Care, support and treatment are fundamental elements of an effective response

55. By 2003, ensure that national strategies, supported by regional and international strategies, are developed in close collaboration with the international community, including Governments and relevant intergovernmental organizations as well as with civil society and the business sector, to strenghern health care systems and address factors affecting the provision of HIV-related drugs, including anti-retroviral drugs, inter alia affordability and pricing, including differential pricing, and technical and and health care system capacity. Also, in an urgent manner make every effort to: provide progressively and in a sustainable manner, the highest attainable standard of treatment for HIV/AIDS, including the prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections and effective use of quality-controlled anti-retroviral therapy in a careful and monitored manner to improve adherence and affectiveness and reduce the risk of developing resistence; to cooperate constructively in strengthening pharmaceutical policies and practices, including those applicable to generic drugs and intellectual property regimes, in order further to promote innovation and the development of domestic industries consistent with international law:

56. By 2005, (develop and make significant progress in implementing comprehensive care strategies to: strengthen family and community-based care) including that provided by the informal sector, and health care systems to provide and monitor treatment to people living with HIV/AIDS, including infected children, and to support individuals, households, families and communities affected by HIV/AIDS; improve the capacity and working conditions of health care personnel, and the effectiveness of supply systems, financing plans and referral mechanisms required to provide access to affordable medicines, including anti-retroviral drgus, diagnostics and related technologies, as well as quality medical, palliative and psycho-social care;

57. By 2003, *ensure that national strategies are developed in order to provided psycho-social care for individuals, families, and communities affected by HIV/AIDS;*

HIV/AIDS and human rights

Realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is essential to reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS

Respect for the right of people living with HIV/AIDS drives an effective response

58. By 2003, *enact, strengthen or enforce as appropriate legislation, regulations and other measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination* against, and to ensure the full enjoyment of all human right and fundamental freedom by people living with HIV/AIDS and members of vulnerable groups; in particular to ensure their access to, inter alia education, inheritance, employment, health care, social and health services, prevention, support, treatment, information and legal protection, while respecting their privacy and confidentiality; and develop strategies to combat stigma and social exclusion connected with the epidemic;

59. By 2005, bearing in mind the context and character of the epidemic and that globally women and girls are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, develop and accelerate the implementation of national strategies that: promote the advancement of women and women's full enjoyment of all human rights; promote shared responsibility of men and women to ensure safe sex; empower women to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection;

60. By 2005, (implement measures to increase capacities of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection) principally through the provision of health care and health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and through prevention education that promotes gender equality within a culturally and gender senstive framework;

61. By 2005, (ensure development and accelerated implementation of national strategies for womens' empowerment promotion and protection of women's full enjoyment of all human rights) and reduction of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS through the elimination of all forms of discrimination, as well as all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, abuse, rape and other forms of sexual violence, battering and trafficking in women and girls;

Reducing vulnerability

The vulnerable must be given priority in the response

Empowering women is essential for reducing vulnerability

62. By 2003, (in order to complement prevention programmes that address activities which place individuals at risk of HIV infection, such as riskly and unsafe

sexual behaviour and injecting drug use, have in place in all countries strategies, policies and programmes that identify and begin to address those factors that make individuals particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, including underdevelopment, economic insecurity, proverty, lack of empowerment of women, lack of education, social exclusion, illiteracy, discrimination, lack of information and/or commodities for self-protection, all types of sexual exploitation of women, girls and boys, including for commercial reasons; such strategies, policies and programmes should address the gender dimension of the epidemic, specify the action that will be taken to address vulnerability and set targets for achievement;

63. By 2003, develop and/or strengthen strategies, policies and programmes, which recognize the importance of the family in reducing vulnerability, inter alia, in educating and guiding children and take account of cultural religious and ethical factors, to reduce the, vulnerability of children and young people by: ensuring access of both girls and boys to primary and secondary education, including on HIV/AIDS in curricula for adolescents; ensuring safe and secure environments, especially for young girls; expanding good quality youth-friendly information and sexual health education and counselling service; strengthening reproductive and sexual health programmes; and involving families and young people in planning, implementing and evaluating HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes, to the extent possible;

64. By 2003, develop and/or strengthen national strategies, policies and programmes, supported by regional and international initiatives, as appropriate, through a participatory approach, to promote and protect the health of those identifiable groups which currently have high or increasing rates of HIV infection or which public health information indicates are at greatest risk of and most vulnerable to new infection as indicated by such factors as the local history of the epidemic, poverty, sexual practices, drug using behavior, livelihood, institutional location, disrupted social structures and population movements forced or otherwise;

Children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS

Children orphaned and affected by HIV/AIDS need special assistance

65. By 2003, develop and by 2005 implement national policies and strategies to: build and strengthen governmental, family and community capacities to provide a supportive environment for orphans and girls and boys infected and affected by HIV/AIDS including by providing appropriate councelling and psycho-social support; ensuring their enrolment in school and access to shelter, good nutrition, health and social services on an equal basis with other children; to protect orphans and vulnerable children from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking and loss of inheritance;

66. Ensure non-discrimination and full and equal enjoyment of all human rights through the promotion of an active and visible policy of de-stigmatization of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS; technologies for HIV/AIDS (and its associated opportunistic infections and malignancies and sexually transmitted diseases), including female controlled methods and microbicides, and in particular, appropriate, safe and affordable HIV vaccines and their delivery, and to diagnostics, tests, methods to prevent mother-to-child transmission; and improve our understanding of factors which influence the epidemic and action which address it, inter alia, through increased funding and public/private partnerships; create a conductive environment for research and ensure that it is based on highest ethical standards;

67. Urge the international community, particularly donor countries, civil, society, as well as the private sector to complement effectively national programmes to support programmes for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in affected regions, in countries at high risk and to direct special assistance to sub-Saharan Africa;

Alleviating social and economic impact

To address HIV/AIDS is to invest in sustainable development

68. By 2003, *evaluate the economic and social impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and develop multisectoral strategies* to address the impact at the individual, family, community and national levels; develop and accelerate the implementation of national poverty eradication strategies to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on household income, livelihoods, and access to basic social services, with special focus on individuals, families and communities severely affected by the epidemic; review the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS at all levels of society especially on women and the elderly, particularly in their role as caregivers and in families affected by HIV/AIDS and address their special needs; adjust and adapt economic and social development policies, including social protection policies, to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on economic growth, provision of essential economic services, labour productivity, government revenues, and deficit-creating pressures on public resources;

69. By 2003, develop a national legal and policy framework that protects in the workplace the rights and dignity of persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and those at the greatest risk of HIV/AIDS in consultation with representatives of employers and workers, taking account of established international guidelines on HIV/AIDS in the workplace;

Research and development

With no cure for HIV/AIDS yet found, further research and development is crucial

70. Increase investment and accelerate research on the development of HIV vaccines, while building national research capacity especially in developing countries, and especially for viral strains prevalent in highly affected regions; in addition, support and encourage increased national and international investment in HIV/AIDS-related research and development including biomedical, operations, social, cultural and behavioural research and in traditional medicine to: improve prevention and thereapeutic approaches; accelerate access to prevention, care and treatment and care elements into programmes or actions that respond to emergency situations, recognizing that populations destabilized by armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, including refugees, internally displaced persons and in particular, women and children, are at increased risk of exposure to HIV infection; and, where appropriate, factor HIV/AIDS components into international assistance programmes;

71. Support and encourage the development of national and international research infrastructure, laboratory capacity, improved surveillance systems, data collection, processing and dissemination, and training of basic and clinical researchers, social scientists, health-care providers and technicians, with a focus on the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly developing countries and those countries experiencing or at risk of rapid expansion of the epidemic;

72. Develop and evaluate suitable approaches for monitoring treatment efficacy, toxicity, side effects, drug interactions, and drug resistance, develop methodologies to

monitor the impact of treatment on HIV transmission and risk behaviours;

73. Strengthen international and regional cooperation in particular North/South, South/South and triangular cooperation, related to transfer of relevant technologies, suitable to the environment in prevention and care of HIV/AIDS, the exchange of experiences and best practices, researchers and research findings and strengthen the role of UNAIDS in this process, In this context, encourage that the end results of these cooperative research findings and technologies be owned by all parties to the research, reflecting their relevant contribution and dependent upon their providing legal protection to such findings; and affirm that all such research should be free from bias;

74. *By 2003, ensure that all research protocols for the investigation* of HIV-related treatment including anti-retroviral therapies and vaccines based on international guidelines and best practices are evaluated by independent committees of ethics, in which persons living with HIV/AIDS and caregivers for anti-retroviral thereapy participate;

HIV/AIDS in conflict and disaster affected regions

Conflicts and disasters contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS

75. By 2003 *develop and begin to implement national strategies that incorporate HIV/AIDS, awareness, prevention, care and treatment*

76. Call on all United Nations agencies, regional and international organizations, as well as non-governments organizations involved with the provision and delivery of international assistance to countries and regions affected by conflicts, humanitarian crises or natural disasters, to incorporate as a matter of urgency HIV/AIDS prevention, care and awareness elements into their plans and programmes and provide HIV/AIDS awareness and training to their personnel;

77. By 2003, *have in place national strategies to address the spread of HIV among national uniformed services,* where this is required, including armed forces and civil defence force and consider ways of using personnel from these services who are educated and trained in HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention to assist with HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention activities including participation in emergency, humanitarian, disaster relief and rehabilitation assistance;

78. By 2003, ensure the inclusion of HIV/AIDS awareness and training, including a gender component, into guidelines designed for use by defence personnel and other personnel involved in international peacekeeping operations while also continuing with ongoing education and prevention efforts, including pre-deployment orientation, for these personnel;

Resources

The HIV/AIDS challenge cannot be met without new, additional and sustained resources

79. Ensoure that the resources provided for the global response to address HIV/AIDS are substantial, sustained and geared towards achieving results;

80. By 2005, (through a series of incremental steps, reach an overall target of annual expenditure on the epidemic of between US$ 7 billion and US$ 10 billion in low and middle-income countries and those countries experiencing or at risk of experiencing rapid expansion) for prevention, care, treatment, support and mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS, and take measures to ensure that needed resources are

made available, particularly from donor countries and also from national budgets, bearing in mind that resources of the most affected countries are seriously limited;

81. Call on the international community, where possible, to provide assistance for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in developing countries on a grant basis;

82. Increase and prioritize national budgetary allocations for HIV/AIDS programmes as required and ensure that adequate allocations are made by all ministries and other relevant stakeholders;

83. Urge the developed countries that have not done so to strive to meet the targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and the targets of earmarking of 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance for least developed countries as agreed, as soon as possible, taking into account the urgency and gravity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

84. Urge the international community to complement and supplement efforts of developing countries that commit increased national funds to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic through increased international development assistance, particularly those countries most affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, countries at high risk of expansion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other affected regions whose resources to deal with the epidemic are seriously limited;

85. Intergrate HIV/AIDS actions in development assistance programmes and poverty eradication strategies as appropriate and encourage the most effective and transparent use of all resources allocated;

86. Call on the international community and invite civil society and the private sector to take appropriate measures to help alleviate the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS in the most affected developing countries;

87. Without further delay implement the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative and agree to cancel all bilateral official debts of HIPC countries as soon as possible, especially those most affected by HIV/AIDS, in return for their making demonstrable commitments to poverty eradication and urge the use of debt service savings to finance poverty eradication programmes, particularly for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and other infections;

88. Call for speedy and concerted action to address effectively the debt problems of least developed countries, low-income developing countries, and middle-income developing countries, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS, in a comprehensive, equitable, development-oriented and durable way through various national and international measures designed to make their debt sustainable in the long term and thereby to improve their capacity to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including, as appropriate, existing orderly mechanisms for debt reduction, such as debt swaps for projects aimed at the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

89. Encourage increased investment in HIV/AIDS-related research, nationally, regionally and internationally, in particular for the development of sustainable and affordable prevention technologies, such as vaccines and microbicides, and encourage the proactive preparation of financial and logistic plans to facilitate rapid access to vaccines when they become available;

90. Support the establishment, on an urgent basis, of a global HIV/AIDS and health fund to finance an urgent and expanded response to the epidemic based on an integrated approach to prevention, care, support and treatment and to assist Governments inter alia in their efforts to combat HIV/AIDS with due priority to the most affected countries, notably in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean and to those countries at high risk, mobilize contributions to the fund from public and private sources with a special appeal to donor countries, foundations, the business community including pharmaceutical companies, the private sector, philanthropists and wealthy individuals;

91. By 2002, launch a worldwide fund-raising campaign aimed at the general public as well as the private sector, conducted by UNAIDS with the support and collaboration of interested partners at all levels, to contribute to the global HIV/AIDS and health fund;

92. Direct increased funding to national, regional and subregional commissions and organizations to enable them to assist Governments at the national, subregional and regional level in their efforts to respond to the crisis;

93. Provide the UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies and the UNAIDS secretariat with the resources needed to work with countries in support of the goals of this Declaration;

Follow-up

Maintaining the momentum and monitoring progress are essential

At the national level

94. Conduct national periodic reviews involving the participation of civil society, particularly people living with HIV/AIDS, vulnerable groups and caregivers, of progress achieved in realizing these commitments and identify problems and obstacles to achieving progress and ensure wide dissemination of the results of these reviews;

95. Develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assist with follow-up in measuring and assessing progress, develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation instruments, with adequate epidemiological data;

96. By 2003, establish or strengthen effective monitoring systems, where appropriate, for the promotion and protection of human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS;

At the regional level

97. Include HIV/AIDS and related public health concerns as appropriate on the agenda of regional meetings at the ministerial and Head of State and Government level;

98. Support data collection and processing to facilitate periodic reviews by regional commissions and/or regional organizations of progress in implementing regional strategies and addressing regional priorities and ensure wide dissemination of the results of these reviews;

99. Encourage the exchange between countries of information and experiences in implementing the measures and commitments contained in this Declaration, and in particular, facilitate intensified South-South and triangular cooperation;

At the global level

100. Devote sufficient time and at least one full day of the annual General Assembly session to review and debate a report of the Secretary-General on progress achieved in

realizing the commitments set out in this Declaration, with a view to identifying problems and constraints and making recommendations on action needed to make further progress;

101. Ensure that HIV/AIDS issues are included on the agenda of all appropriate United Nations conferences and meetings;

102. Support initiatives to convene conferences, seminars, workshops, training programmes and courses to follow up issues raised in this Declaration and in this regard encourage participation in and wide dissemination of the outcomes of the forthcoming Dakar Conference on Access to Care for HIV Infection; the Sixth International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific; the XII International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa; the XIV International Conference on AIDS, Barcelona; the Xth International Conference on People Living with HIV/AIDS, Port of Spain; the II Forum and III Conference of the Latin American and the Caribbean Horizontal Technical Cooperation on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infection, La Habana; the Vth International Conference on Home and Community Care for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS, Changmai, Thailand;

103. Explore, with a view to improving equity in access to essential drugs, the feasibility of developing and implementing, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other concerned partners, systems for voluntary monitoring and reporting of global drug prices;

We recognize and express our appreciation to those who have led the effort raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to deal with its complex challenges;

We look forward to strong leadership by Governments, and concerted efforts with full and active participation of the United Nations, the entire multilateral system, civil society, the business community and private sector;

And finally, we call on all countries to take the necessary steps to implement this Declaration, in strengthened partnership and cooperation with other multilateral and bilateral partners and with civil society.

(B) Statement made by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, Member of Parliament and Leader of Opposition at the Special Session of UN General Assembly

India

Statement

by

Her Excellency The Honorable Mrs. Sonia Gandhi,

Member of Parliament and Leader of the Opposition,

Lok Sabha, Parliament of India

The Twenty-Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

New York

June 26, 2001

Mr. President,

This is the first time the General Assembly is holding a Special Session on an epidemic. But HIV/AIDS is now much more than a serious public health problem, it

poses a grave economic and social challenge to the world. We endorse the Secretary General's call for global, regional and national level initiatives to meet the challenge, and we thank him and you, Mr. President, for the initiative to call this Special Session.

HIV/AIDS was the scourge of the 20th century. Sub-Saharan Africa has borne the brunt so far, but its ravages are beginning to be felt in Asia and elsewhere. Asian countries still have low rates of infection, but because our populations are large, even a small increase in the rate translates into millions of cases. We cannot have, particularly in Asia, the high prevalence rates now seen in Africa. The Declaration we adopt must, therefore, address the needs of all countries with a high burden of disease.

The thrust of our global effort should be on prevention, not restricted to the high-risk groups, but reaching out to all sections of the population in affected countries, particularly vulnerable groups like students, youth, migrant workers, rural women and children. Large scale prevention programmes can only be put into operation by involving community representatives and grass-roots democratic institutions, and with them leaders from social, cultural and faith-based groups. The aim should be to bring about a behaviourial change among people at large.

Addressing the crisis in resource-poor developing countries needs strategies totally different from those followed in the developed world. Developing countries need strategies rooted in their socio-cultural environment, with communication strategies tailored to the sensitivities of people in traditional societies. Governments must lead the response to the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS. Civil society has an important part to play, but where it is weak or ill-organised, Governments have an even more crucial role. In India, we have an all-party consensus on this issue, demonstrated by my speaking to you, as Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of my country.

In India, we also have a rigorous and scientific methodology to monitor prevalence levels in the general population. Working estimates indicate that the Indian programme, which has encouraged decentralisation and multi-sectoral involvement, has prevented a runaway spread of infection, produced a quantified increase in awareness levels by accessing individual households and led to a substantial reduction in the risk of transmission through blood transfusions.

While prevention is paramount, care and support for those infected cannot be secondary in importance, or restricted only to the provision of medical services. Social and emotional support from the family and the community at large are vital. Prevention and care must therefore be made mutually reinforcing strategies in a control programme. We advocate a strategy, involving NGOs and civil society, to offer a continum of care from the provision of voluntary testing and counselling services to hospital-based treatment, and drugs for opportunistic infections.

Developing countries with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS also have a high disease burden, spread through several other communicable diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy. Governments have to ensure that resources, always scarce, are equitably allocated to all patients. Within these constraints, countries like India are trying to channel the most resources to HIV/AIDS, with a strong programme-focus on prevention.

The introduction of antiretrovirals in a national programme, however, is a special challenge. In India, even at the reduced price announced by some drug manufacturers, the cost of antiretroviral treatment would be a hundred and fifty times more than the per capita expenditure on health care provided by the Government. Such a large

allocation of funds for a programme of palliative treatment would skew the distribution of resources between key components of our public health initiatives. Nor can the limited resources available for HIV/AIDS control programmes be diverted from prevention to financing antiretroviral treatment, when global evidence shows that a slackening of prevention leads to a resurgence of infection levels. Antiretrovirals, therefore, can only be widely used in the developing world if very substantial additional resources are assured through international funding over at least a decade, to start with.

This brings us to the issue of additional resources. Of the three factors identified in the Secretary General's Report—leadership, coordination and resource—resources are the most important and critical. What makes this Special Session so topical is the recent commitment to create a global mechanism to fund HIV/AIDS prgrammes in developing countries. The norms of eligibility for this global fund must be flexible, its resources equitably apportioned, and it should be designed to serve the needs of all regions of the world carrying high burdens of disease.

A definitive solution to the problem of HIV/AIDS will come about only through the development of potent therapeutic drugs and vaccines. The time-frame for their development is uncertain. If the HIV-infected are to benefit, research must be financed by international funding, so that the product, when available, is in the public domain, for use by all in need.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to assure you of our deep commitment in India at the highest political level to do everything we can to control this epidemic. We have to control it before it overwhelms us.